FCC Lobby Project

Initial Phase Closeout

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Origins

The origins of the FCC Lobby Project lie in several areas.

Experientially, before the project was undertaken, the view presented to visitors was that of simply office. Such a "first impression" given to VIP's, Scientists, and Engineers was hardly consistent with the message intended to be conveyed—namely that the Division is engaged in cutting edge, state of the art activities necessary to the pursuit of the science in which Fermilab is engaged.

More analytically, it was felt that there was:

1. A need to have a place in which Division members, particularly those in the Division Office could receive outside guests—particularly VIP's, scientists and engineers.
2. A desire to have a more informative way to provide scientists, such as those coming for the Lepton-Photon conference in August 2003, with an introduction to the science accomplished by the Division.
3. A need to enhance the visitor experience at Fermilab and at the Computing Division in particular.
4. A need to have a central place in which members of the Division could meet informally.

Phasing

The project was imagined to occur in several phases.

1. The first phase was intended to be a reception, exhibit and information area at the center of the Division.
2. The second phase imagined a revision of the wall between the exhibit area and the Project and Outreach group's offices. The idea was to open up the entire space—replacing solid walls with more of a hanging divider.
3. The third phase imagined extending the open area even further, opening up the ceiling to provide a dramatic technical "feel" and to eliminate the office aspect completely.

Approach

The approach was to take steps to eliminate the “office” feel within the constraints of budget, resources, and time.

To this end, the ceiling tiles were removed and extraneous wiring, sockets, and other elements reminiscent of an office environment were removed. The walls were patched and painted to remove any aspect which would call attention to them—the idea being that they should provide a neutral backdrop on which the more dramatic elements of the reception, exhibit and information area would present their content.

To continue the drama provided by the open ceiling presentation, the hardware was suspended in as much of a magical, minimal support way as possible—meaning that as much as possible, to the viewer the hardware was hung in space by a single architectural element. Power and networking cables and other distracting elements were kept to a minimum.

The hardware consisted of two PC-driven plasma panels and three PC’s with LCD screens. Wireless networking and mouse/keyboard equipment was provided for all units.

For content, the video programs developed by Visual Media Services for previous Supercomputing Conferences were run on the plasma panels in loop mode. The PC/LCD units were set to display:

- Enstore TV – a display of the analysis programs reading and writing data from/to robotic tape drives in real time.
- A CMS assembly video animation, and
- A CDF and DZero event display.

To encourage the Lobby as a gathering place, a few “signature” chairs were obtained—again to diminish the office aura and point the visitor’s experience in a distinctly different direction.

Finally, two large aluminum magnet stands from some prior Fermilab experiment were obtained and placed on exhibit as artifacts and as functional tables.

Budget and Development Time

A rough accounting of expenditures is as follows:

Item	Cost Per Unit	Unit	Quantity	Cost
Building Mod's	$6400.00	Lot	1	$6400.00
Furniture	$2325.00	Lot	1	$2325.00
PC/LCD	$1700.00	Each	3	$5100.00
Dell PC	$867.00	Each	2	$1734.00
Plasma & Mount	$20000.00	Lot	1	$20000.00
Total				**$35559.00**

I do not have the exact figures as spent but have taken the numbers from the expected values.

As far as development time is concerned, a very rough accounting is as follows:

- May – June: Design committee meetings (Bob Tschirhart, David Ritchie, Jeff Kallenbach, Charles Braucher, Fred Ullrich, Kurt Riesleman, Vicky White, others)
- July: Write requisitions, chase reqs, review artifacts. (Jeff Kallenbach, David Ritchie, Bob Tschirhart)
- August: Supervise implementation. (David Ritchie, Jeff Kallenbach). Working during this period were the Plasma screen installers, Troy Dawson, Michael Zalokar, John Urish, Donna Lamore, Ron Cudzewicz, …

Result

The figures show the results.

Figure 1 shows the components against the neutral wall backdrop. The single pole from out of the gallery suspension system is evident.

Figure 1 PC/LCD's and Plasma Panels

Figure 2 shows the Plasma Panel against the backdrop of the building equipment, lending a non-office ambiance. This view is what a visitor might see from one of the chairs.

Figure 2 Plasma Panel Showing Roof Gallery Effect

Figure 3 shows the furniture and artifacts as tables.

Figure 3 Furniture and Artifacts

Figure 4 shows the resulting exhibit area with the staff assembled to provide guides for the Lepton-Photon Symposium tour guests.

Figure 4

Maintenance

Maintenance, after the first three or four weeks during which various screen saver parameters were tweaked, etc., has been relatively infrequent—perhaps a once a week visit is required to reboot one of the computers. Almost all such maintenance has been on the Windows boxes. The Enstore TV display, which runs Linux (top most PC/LCD display) has required only one such visit in three months. The other two PC/LCD units have required more attention.

Reactions and Observations

The reactions of visitors have been interesting to observe:

- Griselda Lopez reports that she has been able to get more work done because visitors have something to do while they are waiting for an appointment. Previously, they would often times cast about for something to do and wind up at her desk.
- I believe I have seen more inclination to congregate in the area. In that way, the redesigned lobby area does seem to be fulfilling the desired role of having a central place in which members of the Division can meet.
- Scientist and Engineer visitors do appear to take the time to look at the video's. I do not have more than anecdotal evidence but it does seem to have engaged them.

Outstanding Near Term Items

A prerequisite for addressing the near term items is to assign maintenance responsibility for the near term. Presently, the maintenance effort is done only on a crisis and a time-available basis by David Ritchie. Due to other commitments of my time, this is not really a practical way to proceed even near term.

The following items are outstanding and need to be addressed:

1. The suspension system as built needs to be evaluated for acceptable engineering. Unknown to me is whether or not the sway of the suspension polls is a problem for the ceiling mounts. The design was developed and reviewed by a number of people prior to construction but the sway was not anticipated (at least by me) and a review of the suspension system in the light of that needs to be done.
2. The network needs to be extended to the Dell Computers which drive the plasma displays in order to be able run more networked displays (such as Enstore TV on a big screen).
3. The plasma displays are suffering "burn-in" because of the image being the same on them for long periods of time. Some method for blanking the display needs to be devised so as not to have the "burn-in" occur.
4. A better write-up of how to deal with problems needs to be made. A maintenance mouse/keyboard is kept in Griselda's filing unlocked cabinet and a rough write-up is taped to the bottom of the keyboard but a better write-up is needed.
5. The Enstore TV program needs to be made operational on the bottom PC/LCD screen where it can be more easily seen and the event display needs to be moved to the top. (This requires installing Linux on the bottom PC/LCD unit.)

Long Term Items

The following long term items are of interest:

1. More varied video's
2. More varied PC/LCD displays
3. A more interactive application – someone mentioned the display as a video conference portal.

4. More evolution of the environment along the lines of the original discussion, such as removing walls, opening up the ceiling more extensively, etc.
5. Display live performance metrics where available (networking stat’s?)

Appendix A

Project Information

Computing Division Exhibit Area

Customer	Stakeholders
CD	The stakeholders are Computing Division management, Computing Division employees, the Office of Public Affairs, and visitors to Fermilab.

Leader(s)	Participant(s)	Effort
Bob Tschirhart, David Ritchie	Jeff Kallenbach, Fred Ullrich, Charles Braucher (Vicky White, Jack MacNerland, …)	

Start Date	End Date	Status
2003-05-01 00:00:00	2003-11-15	Active

Deliverables

1. The first deliverable is to provide a discussion area in which Computing Division members, VIP's, and members of the Scientific Community may interact.

2. The second deliverable is to provide a set of exhibits, artifacts, and displays that inform the visitors and Computing Division members about the mission and goals and activities of the Computing Division.

Description

This project improves the ways that visitors from the target audiences (VIP’s, Scientific Community, School Groups, and General Public) are informed about the mission of the Computing Division.

The goal is to provide better, more informative exhibits and tour components concerning the Computing Division’s mission, goals, and activities.

In addition, it is a goal to provide an interaction area within which Computing Division employees can interact to further develop the Division’s mission, goals, and activities.

Plan
The project phases are: (a) Scope Definition, (b) Interaction Area Design, (c) Interaction Area Furniture Acquisition, (d) Graphical Display Design, (e) Graphical Display Implementation, (f) Artifact Selection (g) Artifact Acquisition, (h) Informational Computing System Handout Design, (i) Informational Computing System Handout Implementation.

Schedule
May 2003 – June 2003: Develop design and plan. (a) – (b) July 2003 – August 2003: Implement. (c) – (g). Also, (h) – (i)
Issues
Comments
The overall scheme will follow the framework of the "ADROIT" model (Arrival, Decompression, Reception, Orientation, Interpretation, and Transformation) as developed by the Office of Public Affairs and AldrichPears Associates Consulting Group.

Appendix B

Data Center Tour

Not really considered as part of the Lobby Project, a tour of the data center was developed to show the Lepton-Photon conference attendees. In symbiotic fashion, the information providing aspects of the Lobby Project, however, does work to show those about to tour the data center some elements of what they are to see.

The tour was organized around nine “stations” within the Data Center. The significant scientific and technical personnel associated with each activity were asked to write a brief description of their activity area, to provide an equipment picture, and a science accomplishment graphic.

These notes are provided at each of the stations within the Data Center and act both as handouts for those taking the tour and as prompting documents for those giving the tour.

Issues:

1. One issue with the Data Center tour is that the order of the stations is such that the first station—SDSS—does not display aspects, such as massive data movement over networks, that are of priority importance to the current Computing Division efforts.
2. A second issue with the Data Center tour is that the handouts / prompting sheets are rather extensive. This means that by the end of the tour one has quite a lot of paper in one’s hand. While some visitors like this, others do not. It is also hard to speak from the sheets—that is, they do not serve the “prompting” function very well.